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NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20506

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June 6, 1970

National Security Study Memorandum 95

TO: The Secretary of State
 The Secretary of Defense
 The Director of Central Intelligence

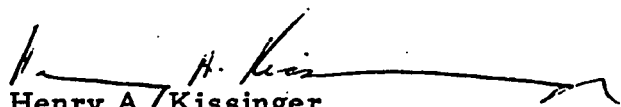
SUBJECT: U.S. Policy Objectives in Indo-China

The President has directed that a study be prepared on an urgent basis of U.S. interests and the short-term U.S. policy alternatives in Indo-China, with particular emphasis on the implications of the Cambodian situation.

This study should be done on the assumption that there is no progress toward a settlement in Indo-China through an international conference or other diplomatic initiatives. It should include discussion of, but not be limited to, the following subjects:

- Our interests and objectives in the current situation; e. g., the degree to which we consider important the maintenance of a non-Communist Cambodian Government.
- The steps which the U. S. might take directly or in support of other countries to further those interests and objectives.
- The issues and options for U.S. policies if the Cambodian Government falls.
- The effect of various U.S. actions on efforts toward reaching a political settlement in Indo-China.

The President has directed that this study be prepared by an ad hoc group chaired by a representative of the Secretary of State and including representatives of the addressees of the memorandum and of the NSC staff. It should be undertaken on a priority basis to enable it to be considered concurrently with NSSM 94 and submitted by June 15, 1970.


Henry A. Kissinger

cc: The Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff

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NSSM 95 -- U.S. POLICY OBJECTIVES IN INDOCHINA

June 24, 1970

Declassified/Released on 6/9/96
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by J. Saunders, National Security Council

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NSSM 95 -- U.S. POLICY OBJECTIVES IN INDOCHINA

I. PURPOSE

This paper examines short term policy alternatives in Cambodia in the light of U.S. interests in Indochina and Thailand on the assumption that there is no early progress toward a negotiated settlement.

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II. U.S. OBJECTIVES AND INTERESTS IN INDOCHINA

A. Broad Objectives

The U.S. would like to see a stable situation in mainland Southeast Asia, dominated by no one country. At the same time, we wish to continue with the orderly and responsible disengagement of U.S. military forces from South Vietnam.

The most critical current issue is to reduce our involvement in Southeast Asia while minimizing the impact of the withdrawal on regional stability, encouraging conditions for the self-determination of the people of South Vietnam, and protecting our credibility for the future.

B. Immediate Interests

Over the near term the U.S. seeks to:

1. Protect U.S. forces and reduce U.S. casualties during the process of withdrawal;
2. Encourage the RVNAF to progressively assume the in-country tasks of pacification and local security in South Vietnam;
3. Limit the NVA/VC ability to use the border areas of Cambodia and Laos for sanctuaries and logistic channels,

without involving U.S. ground troops;

4. Enhance Cambodia's capacity to defend its independence, while minimizing the commitment of U.S. prestige to the survival of a particular regime;

5. Avoid an increase in the threat to Thailand sufficient to provoke serious internal instability and diminish Thailand's capacity to pursue its own independent self-interest;

6. Promote the negotiation of an acceptable political settlement in Indochina;

7. Promote and support cooperative relations and a greater degree of self-reliance within and among the non-Communist states of mainland Southeast Asia, without engaging us in additional commitments or rendering those we have more liable to be called into account;

8. Avoid direct military intervention by the PRC in mainland Southeast Asia, greater convergence in the policies of China and Russia in the area, and increased dependence of Hanoi on Peking;

9. Avoid policies that risk the destruction of the economic, political and social fabric of Indochina and Thailand;

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10. Augment U.S. public support for Indochina policy by avoiding actions that provoke disruptions of domestic tranquility, stimulate the application by Congress of rigid restrictions on U.S. policy, or encourage a climate of public opinion that indiscriminately opposes all foreign interventions and thus damages the credibility of U.S. commitments.

C. Policy Dilemmas

U.S. policy in Indochina must come to terms with three basic dilemmas, which are rendered particularly acute by recent developments affecting Cambodia (e.g., continued stalemate in the negotiations at Paris, the overturning of Cambodian and Laotian neutrality, increased polarization of opinion on the war in the U.S., and growing economic pressures to reduce the expenditures of U.S. resources in the area).

1. The political results we seek in mainland Southeast Asia--a South Vietnamese regime which reflects the balance of local political forces rather than external dictation and a regional balance of forces not dominated by a single state--will require the application of U.S. resources over a prolonged period of time. The time available to the Administration to achieve these objectives, however,

is constrained by domestic political considerations. If overriding priority is attributed to the achievement of particular political results in Indochina, time constraints must be lessened accordingly. If, on the other hand, relative priority is attributed to the withdrawal of U.S. forces with a given time period, we may be forced to adopt more modest expectations regarding the political outcomes in Indochina we can hope to achieve.

2. The U.S. has adopted policies designed to counter the DRV capacity to expand its zone of control in Laos and Cambodia, e.g., cross-border incursions into Cambodia, support of RVN and RTG forces in Laos and Cambodia, and limited military assistance to the GOC. The effect of current budgetary decisions, however, is to decrease the resources available for the pursuit of such policies in the future. The assumption of broader responsibilities, even if some are discharged indirectly through our allies, will require a substantial relaxation of these budgetary constraints. If a continuing decline in Vietnam-related expenditures is considered a given, on the other hand, this places obvious limitations on our ability to carry out larger responsibilities, and requires a reexamination of our current strategy.

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3. If, assuming there is no likely prospect of a negotiated settlement of the war, we support the creation of a regional security system embracing Thailand, Cambodia, Laos and South Vietnam, this would be in keeping with the Nixon Doctrine. But we may find ourselves more directly linked to governments that desire a larger and more prolonged U.S. military involvement in mainland Southeast Asia. The establishment of a regional alliance of anti-Communist states, particularly one involving Thailand, would tend to have a negative effect upon the chances of ultimately negotiating the kind of settlement that is most likely to be acceptable to all the parties with major interests in mainland Southeast Asia, i.e., a "neutralization" of the region and a mutual pledge of military non-intervention by the Great Powers.

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III. IMPLICATIONS OF ALTERNATIVE OUTCOMES IN CAMBODIA

A. Hanoi's Intentions

In addition to strengthening its sanctuaries and its LOC's in Northeast Cambodia, Hanoi appears to be probing to see whether it can bring about the collapse of the Lon Nol Government and the establishment of a Sihanouk-led government in part or all of Cambodia. Whatever Hanoi's immediate intentions may be, inhibitions against an all-out NVA/VC military effort appear to be the following:

1. Diversion of military strength from Vietnam (the overthrow of the GOC is not required for the enemy to establish new and secure base camps and LOC's in Southern Laos and Northeast Cambodia);
2. Uncertainty as to the extent of GVN, RTG and U.S. support which would be given to the GOC;
3. Lack of a Communist political organization in Cambodia sufficiently strong as to control Sihanouk;
4. The possibility that an excessive NVA role in the takeover could provoke a nationalist and international reaction against the Communists (whereas SVN/RTG interventions to assist the Lon Nol Government could deflect the force of nationalism and international opinion against

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the U.S. and its allies);

5. The necessity for the Communists to defend by conventional means any significant land area they acquire against anti-guerrilla attacks.

B. Alternative Outcomes

Politically there are four possible outcomes of the present situation in Cambodia:

1. The maintenance of the present Lon Nol Government-- or an anti-Communist successor government--actively seeking to restrict NVA/VC use of its territory;

2. The maintenance of a non-Communist Government controlling some portions of the country with a rival Communist government exercising authority over other portions of the country;

3. The replacement of the GOC by a neutralist government inclined to accommodate the DRV;

4. The installation of a DRV-sponsored government (with or without Sihanouk) exercising authority throughout Cambodia.

C. Implications of Alternative Outcomes

Outcomes (1) and (2) appear to offer a more favorable mix of costs and benefits for the U.S. than either (3) or (4). As the costs required to preserve outcome (1) rise, the advantages of accepting (2) will increase.

1. The maintenance of the present Lon Nol Government-- or an anti-Communist successor government--actively seeking to restrict NVA/VC use of its territory.

Preserving the present GOC appears to offer several advantages to the U.S., even though its authority is geographically confined and its capacity for self-defense is negligible:

- a. Shipments of supplies and arms through Cambodian ports to NVA/VC would be restricted, thereby complicating Hanoi's logistics problems;
- b. Sanction would be forthcoming for allied cross-border operations;
- c. By keeping southern two-thirds of Cambodia outside Communist control, territorial contiguity between the three Indochinese states and with Thailand would be assured, reducing Thai anxiety to some degree;
- d. Since the U.S. is already regarded as having assumed some measure of responsibility for the Lon Nol Government, its collapse would be read as a significant political defeat.

It is also evident, however, that the authority of the Lon Nol Government is so fragile that:

- a. It cannot affect significantly the NVA/VC ability to use border areas for bases, use overland and waterborne supply systems in Southern Laos and Northeast

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Cambodia to funnel reinforcements into South Vietnam, or exploit some internal Cambodian markets for rice and supplies;

b. Its preservation could involve heavy expenditures for the U.S.;

c. Its preservation also entails other liabilities and risks (e.g., U.S. assistance may invest additional prestige in a weak regime, thereby risking an expansion of our commitment and domestic dissent; allied support for GOC may divert ARVN and RTA from higher priority in-country efforts).

2. The maintenance of a non-Communist government controlling some portions of the country, with a rival Communist government exercising authority over other portions of the country.

As in option (1) the Government of Cambodia's authority would be territorially confined. In this case, however, a rival government would compete for the allegiance of Cambodians, thus challenging the legitimacy as well as the effectiveness of the GOC.

The advantages of this outcome would, of course, depend upon the nature of the territorial division. If this involved roughly a perpetuation of the present status quo,

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the advantages and disadvantages would be identical to (1) above. The disadvantages would increase substantially should the non-Communist forces lose control of the ports in Southeast Cambodia, the major rice producing regions of Western Cambodia, or the Thai border area governing the approaches to Bangkok. In addition, the tenuous position of a non-Communist government contested by superior foreign military forces on its soil would virtually require it to rely ever more heavily upon external assistance, thus rendering it the dependent client of the U.S. or its South Vietnamese and Thai neighbors.

This situation, however, would: preserve the existence of a friendly Cambodian government disposed to permit U.S. air and SVN/RTG ground operations against the sanctuaries and LOC's; provide a vehicle for external assistance; cost us substantially less than a more ambitious effort to maintain GOC sovereignty in a larger area; preserve friendly control of the border areas adjacent to Bangkok and the populated III and IV Corps provinces of RVN; and deny NVA/VC forces access to Cambodian ports and a substantial share of the internal market, including the most important rice producing provinces.

3. The replacement of the GOC by a neutralist government inclined to accommodate the DRV.

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If some neutralist leader could limit NVA/VC military access to Cambodian territory, this might be a relatively advantageous outcome. Under present circumstances, however, it is virtually certain that the DRV or the PRC would not acquiesce in the establishment of a neutralist government which could impair NVA/VC use of Cambodia to pursue the military struggle against South Vietnam. No such "neutralist" leader appears available with sufficient standing to assert his independence against NVA/VC pressures, or to offer any better prospect of stabilizing the Cambodian internal situation than Lon Nol/Sirik Matak.

This outcome would:

- a. Preserve NVA/VC use of border sanctuaries and LOC's;
- b. Allow the NVA/VC wider access to supplies in Cambodia's internal markets;
- c. Permit resumption of arms shipments through Cambodian ports;
- d. Intensify international pressures--hence domestic reactions--against U.S. or allied military operations in the border areas;
- e. Be widely regarded as a political victory for PRC and DRV, and conversely as a setback for the U.S.

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4. The installation of a DRV-sponsored government (with or without Sihanouk) exercising authority throughout Cambodia.

The disadvantages of this outcome are self-evident.

The only implication worth flagging is the question of whether we would prefer a Sihanouk front or a Communist-dominated government without him. If Sihanouk were to return, his own inclinations plus the pressures of Cambodian nationalism might impel him to try to escape from Communist control. This would offer us opportunities to deal with him and perhaps eventually to lead him again to try to limit the NVA/VC use of Cambodia. On the minus side, his presence would help to legitimize a Communist takeover, and might simplify their problem of governing Cambodia. If Lon Nol remained in control of an enclave in Cambodia, Sihanouk's presence would make it easier for the NVA/VC to rally erstwhile FANK troops and use them--with our weapons--against Lon Nol.

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IV. POLICY ISSUES AND ALTERNATIVES

A. How much GOC territorial control is desirable from the standpoint of U.S. interests?

While the Government of Cambodia should not give up territory unless pressed, neither the GOC nor allied forces can afford to expend their limited resources in attempts to hold non-essential areas. Much of Cambodia is not vital to a politically viable GOC. The most viable immediate territorial option from both the U.S. and GOC standpoint would be retention of portions of South and West Cambodia. If this is not possible, or would require an intolerable effort on our part, a southeastern border enclave, including Phnom Penh if possible, would allow the GOC to survive provided it received external economic support. Even if a friendly GOC were confined to a small enclave, it could organize guerrilla operations to disrupt the authority of a DRV-sponsored government, mobilize nationalist motivations against the NVA/VC, and sanction allied harassment of enemy supply lines and sanctuaries in the border areas.

Four alternatives are considered.

1. IN MOST OF CAMBODIA. (SEE MAP AT TAB 1)

The GOC stands little chance of reestablishing its sovereignty in the northeast provinces, i.e., Ratanakiri, Stung Treng, Mondolkiri and Kratie, within the foreseeable future. As a practical matter therefore this alternative means preservation of the GOC's present position plus control of areas contiguous to the north shore of Tonle Sap.

Advantages

- This is clearly what the GOC desires, and it would be difficult to persuade it to adopt more modest objectives.
- Would limit NVA/VC access to Cambodian rice, resources and population, and deny them the use of Cambodian ports.

Disadvantages

- This degree of control is probably unattainable, even with large scale allied ground force assistance and substantial U.S. combat and logistic support.
- Major allied operations in Cambodia in support of the GOC could divert ARVN and RTA units from

essential in-country tasks. If operations were conducted deep in Cambodia, they would risk costly engagements and even defeat in the absence of direct U.S. support.

- GOC's military, political, financial, and administrative capabilities are severely strained. An attempt to establish and maintain control over this large area would risk a serious overextension of their resources and could jeopardize their position throughout Cambodia.

2. IN SOUTH AND WESTERN CAMBODIA (E.G., FISHHOOK/KOMPONG CHAM/PHNOM PENH/SOUTH SHORE OF TONLE SAP). (SEE MAP AT TAB 2)

Advantages

- Would permit the GOC control over a majority of the population and most of the principal rice producing areas.
- Would retain critical border areas adjacent to SVN III and IV Corps in friendly hands and deny the Cambodian coast to NVA/VC.

-- Would preserve east-west LOC's to supply the GOC.

-- Would allow Thai access to Cambodia, thus preserving conditions favorable for Thai-Cambodian cooperation.

Disadvantages

-- Would extend GOC military, political, and administrative resources to the limit.

-- Feasibility would be contingent upon the absence of determined NVA/VC military effort, and the availability of substantial combat and logistics support from the U.S. and allies.

-- Would not preserve friendly control of the entire Thai-Cambodian border area, giving rise to increased Thai apprehensions and pressures to

-- strengthen U.S. commitment.

3. IN BORDER ENCLAVE. (SEE MAP AT TAB 3)

If confined to an enclave, it would be most advantageous for the GOC to maintain control of southeastern Cambodia, including Kompong Som. Even an enclave limited

to Svey Rieng Province would offer certain advantages.

Advantages

- Would preserve in Cambodia a government willing to sanction continued allied paramilitary and air operations against NVA/VC bases and LOC's.
- Would secure a sufficient foothold on Cambodian territory to enable a friendly government to survive, and to organize and expand its political and military capabilities.
- An enclave in southeastern Cambodia along the SVN border would shield Vietnamization efforts in the Delta.
- An enclave which included Kompong Som would avoid total GOC dependence upon SVN and deny NVA/VC use of Cambodian ports without necessitating sea interdiction.
- Though it would require some U.S. support, this alternative would be much less costly for the U.S. than alternatives 1 or 2.

Disadvantages

- Would leave GOC dependent on external support and leave NVA/VC access to most of Cambodia's

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territory for base camps, LOC's, rice, and additional ethnic Vietnamese recruits.

- If the GOC is confined to a small enclave in Southeast Cambodia, NVA/VC forces could control the entire Thai border area.
- Without Phnom Penh and limited to a small enclave, psychological and political demoralization might lead to the swift collapse of the Cambodian government.

4. SUPPORT GOC IN EXILE OUTSIDE OF CAMBODIA.

Advantages

- Would provide some legal and political facade for allied cross-border operations in Cambodia.

Disadvantages

- If a friendly GOC could not retain control over a limited territorial enclave, it would have little chance of regaining power.
- U.S. support of GOC in exile could inhibit our future freedom of political action if Sihanouk or a "neutralist" leader should replace the present GOC and eventually seek to establish

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some independence from Hanoi.

B. What policies should we be prepared to pursue if the present GOC is collapsing as a result of NVA/VC pressure?

Anything short of major allied ground force involvement would not save the Cambodian Government if it were about to collapse. This kind of involvement probably would be counterproductive, except perhaps for garrison-type support to Phnom Penh if the GOC appeared ready to panic in the face of a clear and overt NVA attack. The most prudent course may be to urge international mediation efforts while pursuing disengagement. We could also offer to assist in the evacuation of members of the present GOC in order to save their lives if such action did not obligate us to continuing support for them.-

Four alternatives are considered.

1. SUPPORT ARVN OR RTA GARRISON FORCE TO DEFEND PHNOM PENH.

Advantages

-- Could deny the enemy control of the capital.

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-- Could rally and encourage the GOC to hold on.

Disadvantages

- Would commit U.S. and allied prestige to the defense of Phnom Penh, raising the stakes, and compounding the negative political consequences if the NVA/VC subsequently were to defeat allied defenders of the capital.
- If NVA/VC forces surround and isolate Phnom Penh, control of the capital may become a negligible political asset.
- Evident dependence of the GOC upon a foreign military presence for its very survival would substantially diminish the GOC's authority in the eyes of Cambodians.
- If prolonged, the garrisoning of the capital by ARVN or RTA troops could exacerbate animosities between South Vietnamese-Cambodian or Thai-Cambodian peoples.

2. SUPPORT EVACUATION OF MEMBERS OF THE GOC FROM PHNOM PENH.

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UNCLASSIFIEDAdvantages

- Could save lives and help prevent a blood bath.
- Would permit the transfer of a friendly GOC to an enclave or facilitate the establishment of a government-in-exile, if either were desired.

Disadvantages

- U.S. participation in the evacuation of the GOC could tend to commit the U.S. to continuing responsibility for it and its leaders.

3. DISENGAGE OURSELVES FROM INVOLVEMENT.Advantages

- If the authority of the GOC deteriorates to the point that there is no effective channel for U.S. and/or allied support, this option could -- limit the political consequences of the GOC's collapse on U.S. prestige.
- Would not necessarily preclude ARVN cross-border operations or U.S. air operations in Cambodia to prevent the full reestablishment of Communist bases along the SVN border.

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Disadvantages

- Could result in the more rapid installation of a government (with or without Sihanouk) inclined to accommodate the DRV.
- Even if we adopt a passive attitude, the collapse of the present GOC would be regarded as a political defeat for the U.S., particularly by Asians.

4. SUPPORT MEDIATION EFFORTS BY THIRD COUNTRIES DESIGNED TO PRODUCE AN INTERNAL POLITICAL ACCOMMODATION, ACCEPT A NEUTRALIST LEADER INCLINED TO ACCOMMODATE THE DRV, OR ACQUIESCE IN THE RETURN OF SIHANOUK.

Advantages

- Although international mediation efforts are unlikely under present circumstances to produce
- a political accommodation between contending groups in Cambodia, such efforts may have some utility in shifting responsibility for the consequences of a GOC collapse from the U.S. to third countries.

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Disadvantages

- The substantial presence of NVA/VC forces in Cambodia gives the DRV an effective veto over the results of any international mediation effort. The only outcome they are likely to accept, i.e., the restoration of a "neutralist" government (with or without Sihanouk), would enable NVA/VC forces to operate in Cambodia virtually without restrictions.
- A neutralist government inclined to accommodate the DRV would oppose strongly all allied cross-border operations, thus increasing the political costs of such operations.

C. What levels of U.S. military/economic assistance should we extend to the GOC?

In the military assistance field, our immediate programs can be geared to Cambodian absorptive capacity and the size of the armed forces needed by the GOC adequately to control territory which we believe feasible. A larger program would not be productive at this time. Our assistance program can remain flexible and expand as critical requirements develop. Budgetary and political benefits may be achieved if we can

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stimulate third country assistance. We can encourage and participate in multilateral economic assistance, but may also have to provide some direct bilateral economic assistance. The need will be for limited budgetary and foreign exchange support for the GOC rather than project assistance.

Four alternatives are considered.

1. MAINTAIN CURRENT LEVEL OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE.

The GOC plans and has the manpower to develop a national regular armed force of about 100-150,000 plus regional armed elements (police and local self-defense) of up to 200,000 additional. Currently, the GOC reports that it has a total of approximately 190,000 personnel in its armed forces of which approximately 50,000 are organized in some 60 battalions (400-500 men each) fully armed and approximately 80 battalions only partially equipped and not trained.

Current U.S. plans call for a modest level of military assistance to support partially the expansion of the regular force from 35,000 to about 65,000, upgrade communications equipment, vehicles, weaponry, and a small Cambodian Air Force of T-28 and C-47 aircraft, and

provide outside training facilities and instructors. Adequate facilities and personnel (U.S. and ARVN) are available in SVN to train both Cambodian units and individuals to support expansion to 65,000. The \$25 million programmed for FY 1971 would permit the training of an additional 80 FANK companies and the support of 3600 Khmer Krom.

As the FANK improves, the level of our assistance (to support a slow expansion beyond the 65,000) may be stepped up, but this would not be productive at this time. For an estimated additional \$52 million, 57 FANK battalions, 20 weapons platoons, eight brigade headquarters, six artillery batteries and two river patrol squadrons could be equipped, trained and deployed in a three-increment program. Training facilities are adequate to support expansion. We should, therefore, maintain flexibility, as FANK ability to reorganize control and administer increases, and be prepared to provide increased military assistance, particularly small arms for regional forces.

Advantages

- Offers Cambodian Army all the assistance they can absorb effectively for FY 71, given limited leadership, administrative and maintenance capabilities.
- Offers encouragement without implying major U.S. commitment to FANK.
- Conserves U.S. resources and has little adverse effect on on-going programs.
- Leaves to Asian states widest possible range of action in support of Cambodia.
- Permits U.S. to avoid establishing that large and visible presence in the capital which tends to accompany expanding aid commitments.
- Provides some encouragement to other small states faced with threat by more powerful neighbor.
- Would not raise confidence of GOC to point where they undertake rash and risky operations against NVA/VC.

Disadvantages

- If GOC collapses, any military aid we offer may

be available to a regime inclined to accommodate Hanoi.

- Current levels may be inadequate to maintain a minimum position in Cambodia.

2. INCREASE LEVEL OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE.

Advantages

- U.S. offer of enlarged U.S. assistance would bolster GOC morale.

Disadvantages

- Supply of aid beyond Cambodia's absorptive capacity would waste U.S. resources and risk loss of equipment to NVA/VC forces, strengthening their threat to friendly forces in SVN.
- Increase in flow of aid to FANK would be regarded as extending U.S. commitments to GOC.
- Would arouse Congressional and other domestic opposition, and an increase in aid may not be authorized by Congress.
- Might require enlarged U.S. presence in Phnom Penh or outlying areas which would tend pro-

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gressively to enlarge our involvement in internal Cambodian affairs and provoke Congressional investigations into overt and covert U.S. activities.

- Would involve increased diversion of resources from other high priority programs at a time when available MAP and MASF resources are shrinking.

3. INITIATE A MODEST BILATERAL ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE PROGRAM WITH MINIMUM U.S. PRESENCE.

Because of the unstable situation in Cambodia, the only assistance that makes sense at this time is budgetary support such as through supporting assistance or PL-480. This program might get Congressional support and could be undertaken without an AID mission.

Advantages

- Would provide a sure source of budgetary support which could be crucial to GOC survival.
- U.S. economic assistance might bolster GOC confidence.

Disadvantages

- Indicating U.S. willingness to initiate bilateral

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aid could enlarge U.S. responsibilities in Cambodia and could discourage third countries from offering assistance.

4. PARTICIPATE IN MULTILATERAL ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE.

This option would involve encouragement of larger assistance efforts by third countries such as Australia, Japan and Indonesia, and by international financial institutions. Thus far sources other than the U.S. have made only very modest offers of assistance.

Advantages

- Would encourage regional responsibility for Asian problems and could produce a non-U.S. advisory effort.
- Would provide broader international assistance and enhance confidence and flexibility for the GOC.

Disadvantages

- Feasibility depends on some stabilization of the internal situation (thus on actions of NVA/VC), since potential donors are reluctant to offer aid to a regime whose survivability is in doubt.

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-- aid may not be provided in sufficient quantities

or in adequate time to be of much help.

D. Should the U.S. channel military assistance indirectly through third countries?

In general, direct U.S. military materiel assistance poses fewer legal and political problems than indirect assistance via a third country. Direct materiel assistance, however, invests U.S. prestige more heavily in political developments in Cambodia. Regional assistance is useful both as a psychological factor for the GOC and as a constraint upon the North Vietnamese. It can be stimulated by some arrangement for increases in U.S. assistance levels to third countries, based on a particular country's needs rather than a direct one-for-one replacement by the U.S. The expanded use of ethnic Khmer forces (i.e., -from SVN and Thailand) will continue to be generally more advantageous than reliance on regular foreign troops, although recruitment potential is thin and support problems remain.

Two alternatives are considered.

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1. TRANSFER OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE THROUGH THIRD COUNTRIES.

Advantages

- Would lessen the appearance of a dominant U.S. role.
- Third country training/advisory assistance could assist FANK in the utilization of equipment, without a U.S. advisory role which may be precluded by the Church-Cooper Amendment.

Disadvantages

- Congress may be expected to react negatively to indirect aid, particularly if it were concealed.
- The legality of such transfers presents problems.
- Third country assistance involving one-for-one U.S. replacement would not enhance regional initiatives and would tend to make a travesty of the Nixon Doctrine.
- If Indonesia is used as a conduit, its non-alignment and credentials as a potential mediator would be impaired.

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2. SUPPORT EXPANDED ETHNIC KHMER FORCES FOR USE IN CAMBODIA UNDER CONTROL OF FANK.

Advantages

- Compared with U.S. support of RTA and/or ARVN units in Cambodia, this would be less costly for the U.S., would divert fewer allied resources from in-country security tasks, would be less likely to be perceived as a U.S. commitment to preserve the GOC, and would be less likely to stimulate DRV and/or PRC counter-measures.
- Most support could come out of Cambodian MAP, thus circumventing some of the obstacles to financial support for regular units.
- Could contribute to Cambodian-Thai and Cambodian-South Vietnamese cooperation if a non-Communist GOC survives.

Disadvantages

- Combat effectiveness probably low, i.e., on a par with newly recruited FANK troops.

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-- Simulates a "third force" in Cambodia, loyal principally to whoever pays them.

-- U.S. support for "mercenaries" could provoke adverse Congressional reaction, particularly if the Church-Cooper Amendment passes in its present form, and lead to a reduction in funding.

-- Would require economic assistance to Cambodia to provide pay and allowances.

E. What military operations should the U.S. undertake in Cambodia after June 30?

At this time a limited U.S. air interdiction program concentrating on NVA/VC sanctuaries and LOC's to South Vietnam appears productive, particularly if combined with a limited indigenous ground harassment program. A more extensive program is not likely to produce benefits commensurate with costs. Use of U.S. personnel on the ground within Cambodia raises serious problems and should be avoided. We should consider a contingency plan to deny the Communists use of Cambodian ports if they appear likely to gain access to the coast.

Five alternatives are considered.

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1. CONDUCT AIR RECONNAISSANCE SURVEILLANCE THROUGHOUT CAMBODIA AND CONDUCT PARAMILITARY OPERATIONS IN THE BORDER SANCTUARIES IN EASTERN CAMBODIA AND THE TRIBORDER AREA.

Advantages

- Such operations would reduce the element of surprise in NVA/VC operations, harass the flow of men and supplies into SVN, and deprive the enemy of an area for unmolested regroupment.
- Would imply no political obligations, inasmuch as the area in which paramilitary operations have been conducted has been outside GOC and RLG control.
- Few resources would be diverted from Vietnam programs.
- Limited covert paramilitary operations and deeper intelligence collection efforts in Southern Laos would facilitate harassment of the flow of men and supplies into SVN.
- Of the options considered, this is least likely to provoke significant DRV countermeasures.

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Disadvantages

- Use of U.S. personnel would make indigenous force operations more effective, but their use, especially in ground operations, would provoke domestic U.S. criticism as being contrary to the pledge to remove personnel from Cambodia and would be inconsistent with the Church-Cooper Amendment if it should pass in its present form.
- Would be regarded in the U.S. as escalation if it became known.

2. CONTINUED AIR INTERDICTION OF ENEMY LOC'S IN LAOS AND LIMITED INTERDICTION IN CAMBODIA (INCLUDING RIVERINE INTERDICTION OF MEKONG AND SEKONG).

Advantages

- Would have adverse effect on NVA/VC morale and their ability to supply and reinforce their forces in South Vietnam.
- As long as these are not combined with ground operations, they would appear as a logical continuation of existing operations without giving rise to new DRV escalatory countermeasures.

- Would provide collateral benefit and support for the GOC.

Disadvantages

- Current high operating costs would continue.
- Might lead to an extensive interdiction program occasioning a predictable domestic reaction against a widened U.S. military involvement in the war.
- If operations involved populous areas, they might weaken the social and economic fabric of Cambodia (e.g., serious refugee problems) and cause resentment against the GOC and in the United States.
- Would contribute only marginally to the survivability of the GOC.
- Air interdiction of the waterborne supply system (Mekong and Sekong Rivers) would be relatively inefficient and politically costly in view of the widespread commercial use of these rivers.

3. U.S. TACAIR OPERATIONS IN SUPPORT OF FANK.

- Could help preserve a non-Communist government in Cambodia by harassing NVA/VC forces throughout Cambodia.
- Could hamper enemy efforts to set up new base areas deep in Cambodia to replace former sanctuaries.

Disadvantages

- Less directly related to U.S. objectives in South Vietnam than options 1 or 2.
- Would convey U.S. commitment to Lon Nol Government and signal a significant widening of the war.
- Would not be decisive in preserving the GOC in face of determined NVA/VC pressure.
- Most likely to provoke Communist escalation and reaction against the GOC and in Indochina.
- Likely to arouse great domestic criticism.

4. U.S. SUPPORT FOR EXTENSIVE ALLIED PARAMILITARY OPERATIONS IN SOUTHERN LAOS, NORTHEAST CAMBODIA, AND NORTHWEST SOUTH VIETNAM.

This would involve training and support of a large allied irregular force to conduct reconnaissance and

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interdicting operations against NVA/VC LOC's.

Advantages

- Would further inhibit the NVA/VC supply flow into Cambodia and South Vietnam and raise the cost of supply operations.
- Would divert some NVA/VC military resources that might otherwise be used against the GVN or GOC.

Disadvantages

- Would divert scarce allied resources from higher priority tasks elsewhere (e.g., within South Vietnam, Thailand and Cambodia).
- To the extent U.S. forces are involved and U.S. casualties are taken it would contravene the Church Amendment, would expand our involvement, and raise questions for the U.S. press and Congress.
- Would not prevent an adequate flow of supplies from reaching NVA/VC forces in Cambodia and South Vietnam.
- If Thais are involved with U.S. backing, might require increased U.S. commitment.

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- Most likely to provoke Communist escalation in mainland Southeast Asia.
- Of the alternatives considered, this alternative is likely to arouse the greatest U.S. domestic criticism.
- By threatening major NVN interests, could upset the political-military balance which has prevailed in Laos; might provoke DRV retaliation against the RLG or elsewhere in Laos.
- The introduction of this force into Southern Laos could lead to the disruption of the internal equilibrium within the Royal Lao Government.

5. NAVAL INTERDICTION PROGRAM OFF CAMBODIAN COAST.

If it appears that the NVA/VC will gain access to the sea, inspection of incoming freighters for arms shipments could be instituted, with GOC concurrence, to prevent supply of Communist forces.

Advantages

- Would help to forestall one of the most serious problems which would arise if an NVA/VC-dominated

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government should take over, i.e., the availability of Cambodian ports to the Communists.

By having a surveillance system in operation, we would require the USSR or China to take the initiative in running the blockade, rather than ourselves taking the risk of stopping activity already in motion.

-- In view of the uncertain Cambodian internal political situation, it might be advantageous to initiate a surveillance system while a friendly government willing to sanction the program is in Phnom Penh.

Disadvantages

- There is no present military requirement for it.
- Would pose law of the sea problems and would risk
- a possible showdown with the USSR or China.

F.. Should the U.S. back RVNAF operations in Cambodia after June 30?

The ARVN can assist in impeding the reestablishment and limiting the threat of NVA/VC sanctuaries adjacent to the South Vietnamese border by cross-border operations

limited in depth and frequency and designed primarily to deter a massing of NVA/VC forces and supplies close to critical targets in South Vietnam. This, combined with a limited RVNAF ground-air interdiction program could assist in protecting allied armed forces in South Vietnam. The ARVN could also assist in the maintenance of a southeastern enclave, if operating in close coordination with FANK. The VNAF could supply some limited air support for FANK. The VNN and ARVN could also usefully be employed in maintaining critical land and water LOC's.

Any South Vietnamese operation in Cambodia, however, would carry some danger of incremental expansion. Involvement in operations requiring an extensive and prolonged presence in Cambodia would have negative effects on programs in South Vietnam and might have greater costs than benefits in Cambodian-Vietnamese relations.

Five alternatives are considered.

1. ARVN FORCES WHEREVER NEEDED TO SUPPORT THE GOC.

Advantages

-- Could help preserve a non-Communist government

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without deployment of U.S. ground forces in Cambodia.

- If successful, would generate GVN confidence,
- with perhaps favorable effects upon the Vietnamization program. --

Disadvantages

- Would divert ARVN from tasks more directly related to Vietnam operations, and perhaps impede Vietnamization.
- Possibility of serious Vietnamese-Cambodian friction would be much greater if operations were prolonged in populous areas.
- Could lead to permanent occupation of parts of Cambodia, and even trigger similar RTG actions to take over parts of Western Cambodia.
- This option is most likely to provoke Communist counteraction designed to inflict defeat on ARVN and perhaps draw U.S. more deeply into Cambodian situation; could lead to SVN-GOC demands that U.S. become more directly involved.
- U.S.-supported ARVN operations not directly in

support of Vietnam programs would raise serious legal issues with the Congress in view of statutory limitations on use of MAP and MASF financed materiel in operations in a third country.

- ARVN has little capability to operate beyond a line roughly corresponding to the major axis of the Mekong River.
- The longer ARVN (or RTA) units are deployed in Cambodia and the wider is their scale of operations, the more Lon Nol will look like Sihanouk to many Cambodians, i.e., guilty of sanctioning a Vietnamese military presence on Cambodian soil.

2. LIMITED ARVN FORCES AND SUPPORT IN VITAL AREAS OF SOUTHEAST CAMBODIA.

Advantages

- Operations limited in both time and scope diminish, although they do not eliminate, the disadvantages noted in Option 1 above.
- May be necessary for the preservation of any GOC presence on Cambodian soil.

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- Would assist in protecting friendly forces in South Vietnam by denying the Communists sanctuaries opposite vital III and IV Corps areas.
- Could be the only way to keep vital LOC's open to the GOC.

Disadvantages

- Would still have the disadvantages mentioned in Option 1 above -- calls for help, legal problems, friction, etc.
- Would divert RVNAF resources incrementally from South Vietnam if NVA/VC pressures mounted.

3. ARVN FORCES TO HARASS VC/NVA LOC'S IN NORTHEAST CAMBODIA

Advantages

- Would further complicate NVA/VC logistic movement into South Vietnam.
- Could be justified as being directly related to Vietnam operations.

Disadvantages

- If this involved deep and frequent penetrations, it could result in a counterproductive diversion of resources away from in-country tasks.

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- Would not effectively block the flow of enemy and supplies through Northeast Cambodia.
- Would be relatively unproductive in aiding the survival of the GOC.
- Would pose some risk of escalatory countermeasures by the DRV.
- If ARVN is pressed, it might result in demands for U.S. help, which would be difficult to fulfill.

4. ARVN FORCES TO IMPEDE REESTABLISHMENT AND USE OF BORDER SANCTUARIES.

Advantages

- Could stimulate the GVN's self-confidence and make U.S. troop withdrawals more acceptable.
- Would keep concentrations of enemy troops and supplies away from vital areas in South Vietnam.
- If ARVN employed a mobile strike force only in occasional sweeps of the border areas, the chances of their devastating the Cambodian economy, arousing Cambodian animosities against South Vietnam, and diverting important assets from the Vietnamization program would be minimized.

-- If confined to operations directly related to the military situation in South Vietnam, this option would avoid political commitments

-- to the GOC.

-- Least objectionable politically in the U.S. and least likely to lead to escalation and U.S. involvement.

Disadvantages

-- Could divert ARVN forces from tasks in South Vietnam.

-- If U.S. troop withdrawals are thereby delayed, this would lead to U.S. domestic criticism.

5. VNAF AIR OPERATIONS IN CAMBODIA IN SUPPORT OF FANK.

Advantages

-- Of the alternatives considered, this would involve the least damaging diversion of RVNAF resources from in-country tasks.

-- Could provide helpful support to FANK whose air arm is negligible.

-- Could remove the need for the U.S. to undertake

such air support.

Disadvantages

- For effective support a forward base in Cambodia and the deployment of some ARVN close by for security would be required.
- U.S. support of VNAF would pose legal and political problems if operations were conducted in areas beyond the border sanctuaries.
- If VNAF operations prove effective, there would be some danger of incremental and growing SVN involvement to preserve a friendly GOC.
- Would involve some danger of damage to Cambodian civilian population and property, thus raising Cambodian-Vietnamese frictions and political problems.

G. Should the U.S. back the employment of additional Thai forces in Cambodia?

There are only limited Thai regular forces available for deployment in Thailand, given the already thin in-country counterinsurgency and self-defense assets. The use of regular Thai military assets in Cambodia raises

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problems relating to the expansion of U.S. commitments to Thailand, including SEATO, Communist retaliation against Thailand, Cambodian resentment, the legality of U.S. support, and domestic opposition to an alleged widening of the war.

A Thai RCT, together with supporting units if deployed close to the Thai border, is available for Cambodia, but may not be used because of limitations on U.S. support. Beyond this, unless the Black Panther units from South Vietnam were used, which raises some sticky problems, it would take six-eight months for Thai mobilization and training to provide substantial additional forces.

A feasible use of the limited Thai ground forces could be in a LOC security role in western Cambodia, or to provide protected zones along the border. Employment of RTAF assets in support of FANK is feasible only insofar as forward basing requirements are met and air support of any RTA units in Cambodia has been assured. Any use of Thai forces in Cambodia beyond its immediate border areas would further lock the RTG into a U.S.-backed, active, anti-Communist military role throughout

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Indochina. This could reduce Thai diplomatic flexibility and diminish the possibility of any long-term political accommodation in the area.

Four alternatives are considered.

1. SUPPORT EMPLOYMENT OF RTA GROUND UNITS WHEREVER NEEDED.

Advantages

- Would offer some additional military support to the GOC without any direct U.S. involvement.
- Would help convince the Thai that the U.S. is seriously concerned about security in Southeast Asia.
- Could promote Thai-Cambodian cooperation.

Disadvantages

- Only limited Thai forces are available, without impairing Thai in-country counterinsurgency and self-defense capabilities.
- Might be interpreted by North Vietnam and/or the PRC as a direct challenge to the Communist position in Indochina, leading to retaliatory measures against Thailand, e.g., increased support for insurgency in North or Northeast Thailand, sapper

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attacks against U.S./Thai bases.

- Would further lock the RTG into a U.S.-backed, active, anti-Communist military role throughout Indochina, which could reduce Thai diplomatic flexibility and diminish the possibility of any long-term political accommodation in the area.
- Would risk Thai-Cambodian and, possibly, Thai-Vietnamese friction if Thai forces operated in populous areas.
- Thai forces are incapable of extensive operations without substantial U.S. logistic support. Such support would be difficult to render, would raise serious legal problems, and could evoke serious negative Congressional reaction and public criticism to the use of mercenaries in an expanded war.
- Could lead to an invocation of the SEATO commitment if RTA units suffered defeat at the hands of NVA/VC forces.
- Would further compromise the concept of Cambodian neutrality, and make more difficult the achievement of a political settlement in Indochina.

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2. PROTECT WESTERN PORTION OF CAMBODIA IN A TACIT
DIVISION OF LABOR WITH FANK.

The advantages and disadvantages discussed in 1 would also apply to this option, although to a lesser degree. In addition, Thai ground force operations in Western Cambodia would stimulate Cambodian fears that RTA units would not be withdrawn. It might even result in Thai annexation of some Cambodian territory.

3. TO SECURE A NARROW BORDER ZONE IN BATTAMBANG/PURSAT.

Advantages

- Would satisfy the most immediate Thai security interests.
- Would confine the Thai to an area of operations within their capabilities and supportable from Thailand.
- Actions obviously keyed to the self-defense of Thailand would be easier to explain and defend.

Disadvantages

- Deployment of RTA units beyond the border is not required for Thai security.

- A prolonged presence of RTA units would generate Cambodian suspicions of Thai ambitions, and perhaps result in the annexation of some Cambodian territory.
- Operations in populous areas could in any event lead to Thai-Cambodian frictions.
- The Communists might deliberately escalate operations in this area in order to strain U.S.-Thai relations; such efforts, even if unsuccessful, would threaten a widening of the war.

4. RTAF AIR OPERATIONS IN CAMBODIA IN SUPPORT OF FANK.

If Thai ground forces are committed, they would clearly be supported by the RTAF. If RTA units are not employed in Cambodia, limited RTAF assets would be available to support FANK.

Advantages

- Compared with the use of ground forces this would be an efficient means for the RTG to offer helpful assistance to the GOC.
- Would provide some needed air support to FANK

without any direct U.S. involvement.

Disadvantages

- If operations were conducted beyond a limited area contiguous to the Thai border, forward bases and a ground force presence would be required. While this would be consistent with Thai "forward defense" strategy, it would also lead the RTG to intensify pressure for increased U.S. support and a strengthened U.S. commitment.
- U.S. financial or logistic support for Thai air operations in Cambodia would pose legal and political problems.
- Thai air operations in populous areas would pose problems of coordination and civilian casualties.

H. To what extent should the U.S. encourage greater GVN/GOC/RTG/KLG security cooperation?

A formal anti-Communist security alliance of these states would have the following potential liabilities: it would be greatly dependent on the U.S. for leadership and support; would tend to draw us further into an expanded commitment; would threaten Communist retaliation in SEA;

and would subject the U.S. to the combined lobbying of a group of governments dedicated to the maximum obtainable U.S. commitment and involvement in the area. Coordination of allied military plans and operations could be achieved within the framework of an informal low-profile cooperation among GVN-GOC-RLG-RTG, with the U.S. providing advice on military coordination through its bilateral relations.

Three alternatives are considered.

1. SUPPORT AND PARTICIPATE IN A FORMAL NON-COMMUNIST REGIONAL ALLIANCE.

Advantages

- Consistent with the Nixon Doctrine, would encourage the coalescence of governments confronting a common security problem.
- Could facilitate the coordination of military plans and operations and might result in better utilization of region-wide assets.
- Would dramatize the fact that the basic problem in mainland Southeast Asia is DRV aggression

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against non-Communist Indochinese states.

- Might enhance RTG/GVN respect for Laotian and Cambodian sovereignty while their forces were
- operating there.

Disadvantages

- The assets and capabilities of these states are sufficiently weak that an effective anti-Communist alliance would be heavily dependent upon the U.S. for financing, leadership and support.
- These states might interpret U.S. participation as meaning an enlarged U.S. military commitment and greater emphasis on our part on military rather than political efforts to reach a settlement.
- Formal engagement of the Thai in an alliance with Indochinese states might provoke additional PRC support for Thai insurgency and wider PRC involvement in the whole Indochina struggle.
- Would further polarize the situation politically and militarily, thus diminishing the prospects for political arrangements that could support a solution in mainland Southeast Asia.

- By joining such an alliance, the GOC and RLG would further renounce their neutral status, possibly eroding their international support.

2. ENCOURAGE REGIONAL ASSOCIATION WITHOUT DIRECT U.S. PARTICIPATION.

Advantages

- Lack of direct U.S. involvement would make less likely an expansion of U.S. responsibilities.
- Less likely than Option 1 to excite U.S. domestic opposition.
- Less likely than Option 1 to provoke increased PRC countermeasures.

Disadvantages

- Without a major U.S. role, the effectiveness of a regional association would be minimal.
- RTG participation in such an alliance would raise the question as to whether U.S. commitments under SEATO had been extended.

3. ACCEPT INFORMAL REGIONAL COOPERATION WITH LOW-LEVEL U.S. COORDINATION AND SUPPORT.

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with the maintenance of an inconspicuous U.S. role.

- Even a low-profile U.S. role in a region-wide
- military coordinating body would risk some increased U.S. involvement and commitment in mainland Southeast Asia.

